

sent 5/9/19

Dear Members of the Sarah Lawrence Community,

Many of you may have seen media accounts regarding a group of former students and their alleged interactions with the parent of one of those students. My heart goes out to those, SLC alumni and otherwise, whose lives may have been impacted by this parent – indeed, I hope that the spotlight now shined on them does not contribute to further distress. Though I have been, and remain, deeply troubled by these accounts, I have thus far refrained from commenting to our community, both out of respect for the privacy and well-being of the former students involved and also because of the real limits imposed by federal law on the College's ability to discuss current and former student education records. However, certain uninformed, inaccurate, and highly irresponsible media reports and commentary compel me to share with you what I can about the facts of this matter as they relate to the College.

First and foremost, the College did not knowingly allow this parent to inhabit his daughter's dormitory apartment, as claimed in media reports. The College has conducted a thorough search of its records across many offices as well as interviewed current and former staff responsible for the safety and well-being of students who were at Sarah Lawrence at the time of the events alleged to have occurred on our campus. On the basis of that review, we have found no evidence to support the claim that this parent lived on the campus during the 2010-11 academic year, nor that college employees who were responsible for our students' safety ignored such reports or any College policy impacting student health and safety in this regard.

I also am profoundly troubled by the demonstrably false claim that one of our long-serving campus leaders resigned as a result of these alleged events. This administrator first approached me in the summer of 2018 to share his plans to retire at the end of the 2018-19 academic year—his 20th year of dedicated service to a college he loves, and where he has steadfastly supported thousands of students. We announced his decision to retire last fall, for no reason other than to allow time to plan the search for his successor. Just before winter break, he suffered a terrible fall and has been on medical leave this spring as he recovers. I should not have to disclose personal information such as this to combat acts of irresponsible character assassination, but do so with his permission, to quell uninformed media speculation as to why he is not now on campus.

I understand that these recent media allegations may have left you with many questions. With that in mind, I want to reaffirm above all that student health, safety, and well-being continue to be overarching priorities of the College. We regularly review our staffing, our policies, and our support systems in these critical areas, and will continue to do so proactively.

I thank you for your continued support and confidence in SLC.

Yours,

Cristle Collins Judd
President